

FAITH VICTORIOUS

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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.
And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying,
Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David;
my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word.
And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.
But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.
But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.
And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the masters' table.
Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.
And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”*
Matthew 15:21-28

WE learn from this chapter, dear friends, that our Master was tired of battling with hypocrites and formalists, and therefore withdrew Himself from them. They had come to Him with their foolish charges that His disciples did not observe the traditions of the elders, and they made a great fuss about meats, and drinks, and washing of hands, and all sorts of trifles. The Savior spoke very effectively to them, what if I say that He fired His great gun once for all, and silenced them?

He told them that the real defilement, which rendered men unclean before God, was not a matter of externals, but it concerned the heart, and that it was not that which entered into a man by way of meats and drinks which defiled him, but that which came out of him in his words and actions which were the result of the impure desires within his heart.

Having thus, as it were, annihilated their flimsy arguments, or scattered them to the four winds of heaven, the Master went right away from the cavilers. Do you not feel sometimes as if you would like to act in the same way? If you are true believers, if you have learned to worship God in spirit and in truth, do you not get weary with the endless wrangles about ritual, and outward ceremonial, and the special and particular way in which divine worship should be performed? Do you not feel as if there were something better for you to do than to be always fighting about these secondary matters?

Besides this, the atmosphere that was round about these hypocrites and formalists was so heavy, so laden with miasma, so unfit for a spiritually-minded person to breathe, that the Lord wanted to get right away from it to some quiet place where He might rest awhile, and as it were, recover Himself from the sense of oppression and weariness which had come over Him in such company, so He proceeded far from His usual haunts to the very verge of His diocese, to the edge of heathendom, “Jesus went thence, and departed to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.”

Mark tells us that He “entered into a house, and would have no man know it.” He did not go there to preach, He went into that far-off region that He might rest, unknown and in quiet for a brief season, and then go back to Galilee, and once more preach the Gospel to those who might gather to hear Him.

Let us, from this narrative, learn to avoid making much of little insignificant things, lest by so doing we drive Christ away from us. Let us beware of giving heed to the traditions of men, and putting them in the place of the commandments of God, lest Christ betake Himself to some other place, and so the candlestick be taken out of our midst, and we be left in the dark.

I would have you notice, dear friends, that even when Jesus Christ goes away weary, He still has designs of love toward the people elsewhere. He is not merely turning with disgust away from Scribes and Pharisees, but He is going to meet one whom His far-seeing eye has beheld, a lonely, sorrowful woman who is coming to meet Him. Eternal decrees have appointed that at a certain spot this needy one shall meet Him, and He knows that it is so and therefore He is on His way to the borders of Tyre and Sidon to accomplish the purpose of almighty grace.

See how much the Savior thought of a single soul, to His heart it was worthwhile to walk many weary miles even to bless one. We are ambitious to bring hundreds to Christ, and we are quite right if we desire it only for His glory, let us even enlarge our longing, but we shall never bring many to the Savior until we first feel overjoyed at the thought of bringing even one.

We have not yet sufficiently learned the value of an immortal soul if we do not feel that we would be willing to live, say seventy years, to be the means of saving one soul, and be willing to compass the whole globe, and preach in every city, and town, and village, if we might only be rewarded at the last with just one convert. Evidently, our Lord Jesus realized intensely the value of one lost sheep, and He left the ninety and nine that He might go and find this solitary sad soul, and bring her to Himself.

“Oh, come let us go and find them!”

Let us ever be on the watch, and be willing to be drifted by providence anywhere if, in that drifting, we may come across some shipwrecked soul, who may hail us, and we may effect its rescue, and take it home to the port of peace.

I want to try to set forth the case of this woman, not going fully into the whole story—for I have preached upon this narrative many times—but especially dwelling upon the one point that this woman had great faith in Jesus Christ, an intense persuasion that He was able to heal her daughter, and moreover, that He had a most loving heart, and was willing to work the cure she craved. She was determined that, whatever might be her disadvantages, she would press her suit with the Son of David until she obtained from Him the boon for which she was asking.

There may be someone, to whom I am now speaking, who is at a great disadvantage with regard to salvation, but dear friend, if you can believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save you, I want to encourage you to press your suit with Him, and never to cease your pleading until you get the desire of your heart, and He sends you away saying, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

I. First, then, concerning this woman, notice that SHE WAS AN OUTSIDER ALTOGETHER.

She was not a Jewess, she did not belong to God’s chosen people, she was not one to whom Christ came to preach, for He said that He was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. She was what we sometimes call, “a rank outsider.” To herself or her fathers, no covenant promise had ever been given, no prophet had ever spoken, no Gospel message had ever been delivered. So far from being within the church, she was not even within the congregation, she had no connection whatever with the whole Gospel system, except such a connection as infinite grace was pleased to make.

I delight to think that, every now and then, there come into this congregation persons who were not born and brought up in the midst of godly surroundings—for whom no mother has ever prayed, to whom no father has ever spoken a loving word concerning Christ—persons who were never regular occupants of seats in the house of prayer, and perchance have only a very few times in their lives ever entered such edifices, who have not read the Bible, and have not been in the habit of bowing the knee in prayer. Perhaps they have never breathed a prayer except in an hour of extreme sickness, or in some time of great alarm, as in the midst of a storm at sea.

Well, this woman was a type of persons in this condition. She was no Israelitess, she was a Canaanitish woman, and the Canaanites were condemned to die, they were to be exterminated out of the country. She was one of the handful who remained of the aboriginal tribes that were not slain by the sword of justice, but had lived on, as it were stealing their lives from the edge of the sword, she was one

of a condemned race, a people who, though spared from execution, continued to worship false gods, and who did much harm to Israel by introducing the worship of Baal among them. You remember the mischief wrought by that Sidonian queen, proud Jezebel, who tried to stamp out the worship of JEHOVAH, and to set up instead thereof her idol gods.

This woman, who came to Christ, was a descendant of those heathen tribes that inhabited the northern part of the country which God had given to Israel, yet she was the one who, almost beyond any other woman, *exhibited a mighty faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*. I wonder whether I am addressing any who are, apparently, as far off from every religious hope as this poor Canaanitess was, who, nevertheless, shall feel within their hearts faith in Him who is the Son of David and the Son of God—faith in the Christ who, from the highest heaven, descended far that He might tread this guilty earth, and bow His shoulders to bear His people's guilt that He might lift them from the depths of hell up to the heights of the happiness of God.

I should not be at all surprised if this should prove to be the case, for God has often found His best servants among His worst enemies. Some of the brightest diamonds in Christ's crown have been dug out of the darkest mines. Oh, that it might be so, that while I am preaching, someone who is far off from God might hear the great silver trumpet blow, and might say in his heart, "I will go to Jesus with my cries and tears, for I believe Him to be the Son of God, mighty to save, and if mercy is to be had, I will find it, though I deserve it not, but am far off from Him. I will press toward Him, I will break through every obstacle and barrier till I come to Him, and obtain salvation at His hands."

That is our first point, this woman was altogether an outsider, and I do hope our meditation on it may cheer some far-off one, and induce him or her also to come to Jesus for salvation.

II. In the second place, this woman was not only herself far from all outward religious privileges, but SHE HAD A VERY DREADFUL CASE TO PLEAD.

She came to Christ to plead for her daughter who was "grievously vexed with a devil." Now, if one comes to Christ to ask Him to cure blindness, or sickness of any ordinary kind, it is a very simple case compared with this woman's. "Lord, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil; a demon has come and made her body to be the place of his abode. O Lord, thou Son of David, interfere in this horrible case! The devil's hand is in it, and only thou canst cast him out."

I know that there are some—it may be that they have stolen into this Tabernacle, perhaps driven in by the rain—whose case is so bad that they have to conclude that *the devil himself must have had a hand in it*. When they come before Christ, it is no common sin they have to confess, no ordinary soul-ruin they have to set before Him, it seems as if there has arisen from the infernal pit some demon who has made them to be the special objects of his attack. The devil is in you, is he? Nevertheless, bring your case before Christ, if there were seven devils within you, instead of only one, remember her out of whom He cast seven devils, ay, and if it were a legion, if a whole band of demons had taken possession of you, remember the Gadarene demoniac out of whom Christ cast a legion of devils.

I know that you are ready to say, "My case is so horrible that I could not relate it." Do not relate it, except to Christ. "Oh, but my sin is so great that I could not tell you!" Do not tell me, I have heard enough of late about horrible sin, and I do not want to hear any more about it, tell it to Jesus, tell it into His ear, and though you are compelled to feel that in that sin there is something more sinful than usual, something extraordinary and out of the common, yet, I pray you, have faith in Jesus Christ that, if you can but get at Him, He can deliver even you out of all this mischief, and all this ruin, and all this filthiness. Though the devil himself be in you, yet, if you believe in Jesus Christ, and you do come and trust Him, you shall be saved.

***"He is able, He is willing;
Doubt no more."***

Oh! that some poor heart, driven almost to despair, might nevertheless cry, "I do believe, I will believe, in the dying living Savior, and I will never rest until I receive from His lips my sentence of

pardon, and from the touch of His hand obtain that eternal life which shall deliver me from the wrath to come.” You may well be encouraged by the case of this woman, who became a great believer although she began far off from God, and in her desperate sorrow the devil himself had a large share.

III. Further, when this woman came to Christ, she found that HE WAS SHUT UP AWAY FROM HER.

That fact does not appear in Matthew’s account, but as I have reminded you, it is recorded in Mark’s Gospel. When our Lord Jesus Christ went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, He “entered into a house, and would have no man know it.” It is quite clear that He wanted rest. He had traveled, as it were, *incognito*, for He did not want to be known, and He had gone into a house, and the door was shut. Then Mark adds, “But he could not be hid, for a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet.”

It did seem a dreadful thing to think that Christ could heal her daughter, and she believed that He was willing to do it, yet there He was inside the house, shut away from her, and Peter said, “You really cannot see him,” and even John said, “Do not trouble the Master, for he is very weary, and must rest,” and practical James said, “My good woman, this is a matter that must rest with us, and we cannot have the Master interrupted just now.”

They all conspired to keep her away, for He would have no man know where He was. He had asked them to guard the door a little while, to let Him be in quiet. He needed to recover from the sickness of heart that He felt at the remembrance of those carping Pharisees, so He must be a little while alone. Those who work for Christ know how much they sometimes need to be left quite alone, yet it was very discouraging to the woman to find that the door was shut where Christ was within the house.

Now, dear sirs, are there any of you here who have great faith in what the Lord Jesus Christ would do for you if you could but come to Him? He well deserves that you should have, for there is none like Him, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. He is willing to forgive all manner of sin and blasphemy, and He has said, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” But peradventure, with all your faith, it has seemed to you as if the door was shut against you.

I used to feel that, if my brother found peace with God, I could understand it, and if my sisters rejoiced in the salvation of Christ, I was very glad, and could well believe it, but I thought that for myself there was no door of hope, no promise that could be intended for me. It is often quite easy to believe for other people, the difficulty is in believing for yourself, and sometimes this is the form of the devil’s temptation, “The Savior is not accessible to you, He does not mean even to speak to you, your case is such that you are shut out from His mercy.”

If Satan lies to you like that, I trust that you will say, like this woman, “Well, if the door is shut, I mean to go in all the same. The Son of David is hiding, is He? But He cannot be hid.” I like what someone calls, “this woman’s glorious impudence.” The angels, when they come before their Lord, are full of holy reverence, and veil their faces with their wings. I doubt not that this woman also had her fears, but at that particular time she exercised a grace that was more to the purpose.

Forgetting all her fears, she said, “He cannot be hid; I must see him, and I will. My child at home is rent and torn with a demon, thrown into the fire and into the water, and I am full of agony on her account. A mother’s heart is in me, and I cannot rest until I have seen this great Physician. He can heal my child, and I believe He will, and I must get to Him.” So she forces her way past the bodyguard of apostles, and gets within the door, and falls at Christ’s feet, and there she lies and cries, “O Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil!”

I wish that each of you would act like that poor woman did and say, “Oh, if the door of mercy is shut against me, yet still I must still try to open it! Whatever the barrier in my way, it will have to yield, for I must be saved. I cannot be lost, I cannot be content to sit down and perish in my sin, I must get to Jesus Christ, and cry to Him for pardon, and I am resolved that I will do so. With holy impudency, as it may seem to others, I am determined that I will approach Him, and cast myself at His dear feet.”

I like the splendor of this woman's faith. She is a Canaanite, whose case has the devil mixed up with it, and from whom Christ conceals Himself, yet she must and will somehow get to Him. Now, what happens next?

IV. The woman's faith was so great that our Lord delighted to see it, and He wanted to see how far it would go, so He put it to a further test. Therefore, next, when she cried to Christ, HE REFUSED HER ANY ANSWER.

She had broken in upon His privacy, she had daringly invaded the apartment where He sought to be in quiet, and she lay at His feet, and prayed a sweetly-appropriate prayer. She expressed her faith in His divinity, calling Him "Lord," and her faith in His blessed royal humanity, calling Him the "Son of David," after she had said, "Have mercy on me," asking only for mercy. It was the only plea she used, "Mercy, Lord, mercy! Son of David, mercy!" Yet this was at first all the answer she received, "*He answered not a word.*"

As Augustine says, "The Word spoke not a word," and that was so unlike Him. He who was always so ready with responses to the cry of grief had no response for her. As if He were made of stone, He scarcely gave her a glance, and when she looked up to those lips which are as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, they dropped not a syllable on her. Oh, what would she not give if He would but speak? He could heal her daughter with a word, yet not a word did He utter, an awful silence filled the room as she waited for Him to speak. But she did not give up in despair, there is the point, she still had faith in Him, and when there was nothing for her ear to hear, there was still something for her heart to believe.

Peradventure, I am addressing some poor lost one who has been praying. You have been crying to Christ for mercy as best you could, you have called Him "Lord," you have called Him, "Son of David," you have lain at His feet, you have wept, you have implored, you have entreated mercy, crying, "Lord, have mercy upon me," yet He has answered you not a word. You have been to hear the Gospel, but you seem to be worse rather than better for hearing it. You have spoken to a Christian friend about your fears, but he has not been able to remove them, and all the while you have prayed, and prayed again, and yet again.

I will tell you what happened to me long ago. When I was convinced of sin, I began to pray. After my own fashion, in deep distress, and from my very heart I prayed many a time, yet I received no answer, and scarcely a ray of hope had found its way into my soul. I heard my mother say, as she was talking to us children about our souls, that she did not believe there was living a single man who dared to declare that he had truly sought the Savior, and that the Savior had refused him. She said she did not think that even in hell there was one who would be bold enough to accuse the Savior of having refused him when he sought Him with prayer and in faith.

I did not say so to her, but I thought within my heart, "I am one who has really and sincerely sought for salvation through Jesus Christ, and I have not found it," and I made up my mind that I would tell others that Christ did not hear prayer, and that one might seek Him with all his heart, and yet not find Him.

Friends, I have never told that untruth to anyone yet, for before I had an opportunity of declaring what I thought was true, I had found Him myself. I discovered that, after all, it was I who was deaf to His voice, and not He who was too far off to answer me. I heard that blessed text, "Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," and at once I looked to Him, and I found peace through the blood of the cross. So will you, dear friend, as soon as you look to Him by faith. If you have prayed, keep on praying. If you have cried apparently in vain, still cry to Him.

Remember that *there is no other door at which you can knock*, therefore you had better continue to knock at this one. If you were on a wild prairie at night, and had lost your way, and at last you saw a light in a window, and you came to a lone house, and knocked there, but no one came to the door at first, you would say to yourself, "Well, I must knock again, because there is probably not another house within twenty miles. I may be eaten of wolves before I find another, so I will just knock, and knock, and knock, and knock again, till I gain admission."

Keep on knocking, dear friend, there is somebody hearing you, depend upon it, and though He may seem slow in coming, He is sure if He is slow. He is just trying you a little to see if you really are in earnest. You have heard of run-away knocks at our doors, there is a loud rap, and the poor servants go to answer it, but there is nobody there, for the mischievous boys have run away. Well, the Master is seeing whether you are going to play with Him with run-away knocks.

If you are a genuine seeker of entertainment in His great house of mercy, you will stand, and say, "I will still knock, and perish knocking if I must, but I will never go away from this spot. Jesus Christ can save me, He alone can save me, I believe that He will save me, and I will never cease to pray while my heart beats and my tongue moves. If I have to die praying, I will die so, but I will never cease from it till I get an answer of peace." Oh, that God would bless this message to some who have been discouraged by having to wait long for answers to their prayers!

V. This woman had a further discouragement, for JESUS REFUSED THE PRAYER OF HIS OWN APOSTLES.

They began to help her in prayer, as she was not herself heard, they took some sort of pity on her, and went to the Master, and said to Him, "Please, Lord, send her away; she makes such a noise, crying after us." Not out of pity to her, so much as from love of quiet for themselves, they became intercessors for her with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Probably I am speaking to someone who says, "Sir, all you have said is true about me, and I have prayed hitherto in vain, but I have asked a Christian friend to pray for me. The other Monday night, I penciled a little note, and put it on the table in the Tabernacle, and they prayed for me at the prayer meeting. I have asked you, dear sir, to pray for me, and I hope you have, but no good has come of it, I am in the same state of sorrow and misery after all the prayers that have been presented on my behalf."

Yes, dear friend, and do you remember what happened in the case before us? The disciples soon gave up the task, they prayed their little bit of prayer, and they did not get the answer they wanted, so they left off, but the woman did not, *she had more perseverance in her than the apostles had*. The Master answered them, and then they stopped, and said no more, but that did not stop her. They might all cease praying, but she would not cease.

Now, suppose the prayers of a whole church have failed with regard to you, still pray on, ay, if all the saints who live on earth had joined in one common intercession, and had all cried to God for you, and they had received no favorable answer about you, and therefore had ceased praying, still you should not cease crying to the Lord.

Go on praying, for He will yet hear you, even in such a case as that, if you can have the splendid faith to be a forlorn hope, and go alone, and only pray the more because others cease to pray for you. Like this woman, worship the Lord, and say, "Lord, help me." Though your prayer grows shorter because you are getting weary, if it grows very intense, and you still keep on pleading, it cannot be long before a prayer-hearing Savior will give you the desire of your heart.

I like this point in the woman, although the apostles had ceased praying, she had not.

VI. Next, notice that, in answer to the apostles, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST GAVE HER A VERY HEAVY REBUKE. He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

That seemed to exclude her altogether, yet still she persevered, and I want to draw a parallel between her case and yours. Dear friend, possibly someone has whispered in your ear, "Suppose you are not one of the elect." Well, that was very much what our Lord's expression meant to her. She was not one of the chosen people, and she had heard Christ say, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Notice that this woman does not battle with that truth at all, she does not raise any question about it, she wisely waives it, and she just goes on praying, "Lord, help me! Lord, have mercy upon me!"

I invite you, dear friend, to do just the same. You are not at present in a state of mind to understand the glorious doctrine of election, you have now the dark side of it turned towards you, and I suppose it

will be so with you until you exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, when you will be able to see it from another point of view.

But anyhow, there is Christ able to save you, and He never yet rejected a sinner who came to Him, therefore come along with you. As to that difficulty about your election, leave it. If you ask me to set up a ladder, and to climb to heaven, and turn over those leaves, folded and sealed, of God's great Book of Life, I cannot do it, neither can you. But I can again remind you that He has said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

He has bidden me go, and "preach the Gospel to every creature," and you are a creature, so I preach it to you, on the strength of being commanded to preach it to you, I invite you to say, "Of the house of Israel, or not of the house of Israel, O Son of David, have mercy on me!" Whether you seem to be sheep or goat, still cry, "Son of David, have mercy on me! I will never leave thee, nor cease to pray to thee till thou shall grant my petition."

This is the kind of faith that Jesus Christ delights in, He was hearing this woman's prayer all the while, and He was resolved to answer it. His heart was getting rest out of her faith, it was such a blessed change for Him from those hypocritical Pharisees with all their rubbish about washing pots and cups. It was such a delight to Him to see this woman believing in Him in real earnest. Faith is the food on which Christ feeds, it is the wine He drinks. This is the cluster that fills the chalice He holds in His hand, these are the apples that are delicious to His taste.

He does love being trusted, and if the biggest sinner out of hell will trust Him, that trust is sweetest of all to Christ. O you Canaanitish woman, you with whom the devil has had to do, you who have not been heard in your prayers up till now, if you can have the courageous faith still not to take "No" for an answer, but to press on, and believe that the Son of David must and will accept you, you shall be accepted. It is but a little while, and He will say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

VII. Lastly, SHE KEPT ON PLEADING UNTIL SHE PREVAILED.

The disciples had given up praying, as I have shown you, and the woman had received a severe rebuff from Christ, yet she continued her prayer. See, she worships Christ, adores Him, crying, "Lord, help me!" Even when she has done that, she gets only this for an answer, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs,"—the word really means, "the little dogs."

Oh, but that was a hard saying, was it not? It was a good nut, with a sweet kernel, and she knew how to crack it, but it had a very hard shell. There are many who would have turned away after such an answer as that, but this Syrophenician was a grand woman, and Christ knew it. She had splendid faith, and He prized it, otherwise He would not have tried it so. He knew that she could bear even this test, so He called her "dog."

Notice that *she kept on with her pleading* whether she was a dog or no dog. Instead of turning back when called a dog, she just pressed forward all the more. She did not raise any question and say, "Now, Lord, that is really too bad, I may be a wretched woman, but I am not a dog." No, after Christ had called her a dog, she took the title to herself, and found no fault with it, and dear friends, whatever the Bible calls you, accept it, do not quarrel with it, for it is quite true. God's Word was not sent to flatter human nature, but to give a faithful description of it. Then, believe it, accept it. Say, "Well, Lord, You call me 'dog.' It is quite true, I am only a dog."

See how this woman turns this title round, she seems to say, "Lord, I am a dog, but then, *I am thy dog, and even dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*" By this it is implied that she meant, "Lord, I am Thy dog, and I am happy to be Thy dog. I would sooner be Thy dog than be the devil's darling. But Lord, Thou call me 'little dog.' Well, the little dogs are those that are allowed to come indoors, and to come near their masters, so I am permitted to come near Thee. And being under the table, if a crumb falls, the little dog gets it. Lord, let me have the crumbs! Thou give a loaded table to Thy sheep of whom Thou speakest so much—the house of Israel, there is bread enough and to spare for them. Thou canst give me this crumb that I crave, and there will be quite as much left as the children can eat."

I like to hear this woman talk in this fashion. As one says, “the children of Israel, that Christ had been with, had turned into dogs; but here is a dog of a Canaanite, and she has turned into a child.” I am sorry to say that there are some who seemed to be children of the kingdom, who turn into dogs, and leave Christ, but there are many poor dogs, with no privileges, that are made willing, by sovereign grace, in the day of Christ’s power, and the dogs are turned into His children.

Now, whatever you really are, poor sinner, confess that you are just that, and whatever hard word Christ gives you, say, “It is true, Lord,” and then, come with the hard words, and with your broken heart, and just lie at His feet, and say, “Lord, still hear me, and grant me this great blessing, for it will be but a crumb to You. Dogs get crumbs, let me get grace.” That was a grand utterance of faith, I wish that some to whom I am now speaking would exercise such faith in Jesus Christ.

Speak after this fashion, “Though all men shall tell me that I shall be lost, I will not believe them. There is a Savior, and I mean to have Him as mine. Though all men shall tell me that Christ cannot save me, I will not believe it, for Christ can save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, and I cannot have gone beyond the uttermost, so I will believe that He is able to save me.”

Do I speak to anyone who says, “But you do not know how I am discouraged?” Well, then, I put this question to you—“Are you a Canaanite?” No, you are not of that accursed race, you are of the same race as the most of us, many of whom have been saved. Yet remember that, Canaanite as this woman was, she believed in Christ, then why should not you?

Have you prayed as she did, distinctly, definitely, and received no answer? Well, if you have, your discouragement is not greater than hers was. But more. Did the Lord Jesus Christ ever say that He was not sent to you? Did He ever anywhere in Scripture indicate that His commission excluded you? He did seem to say that to this woman, yet she could bear even that discouragement, and you have never had as heavy a cross as that to carry.

Next, did the Lord Jesus Christ ever call you a dog? Tell me anywhere in Scripture where He calls you “dog.” But if He did, this woman overcame that difficulty, and so should you. O dear soul, if there should stand between you and Christ all the legions of the infernal lake, you might venture through them all in the name of Christ!

If there did lie between my soul and Christ seven hells, I would swim through them that I might get at Him. He must be able to save me, it cannot be possible that I should have gone beyond the power which is omnipotent, or that I have sinned beyond the virtue of the blood of the Son of God. It cannot be that I should have sins that should be mightier than almighty mercy. Write me down as the blackest of the black and vilest of the vile, what then? So much the more glory to the grace of God when He shall save such a sinner as I am, therefore I will come and trust Him.

O blessed and gracious Spirit, sweetly compel some to believe in Jesus! You deserve, O Lord Jesus, that we believe You up to the hilt, that we believe You to the uttermost, for You are more than our faith can ever make You to be. Help us to believe You. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” This is the Gospel, accept it, and you shall find it true. God grant it! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 15:18-31

Verses 18-21. *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

He went right away, not because He was afraid to speak the truth, but because, having done so, He did not care to remain in the company of those who were round about Him. He would rather go even to the verge of heathendom than live in the midst of Pharisaic hypocrisy, “Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.”

22. *And, behold,—*

There is something here that is worth beholding, so the Holy Ghost draws attention to it, just as we sometimes print, N.B., *Nota bene*, mark well, “behold,”—

22. *A woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts,—*

Possibly she did not know that Christ had come, but anyhow, when Christ comes, sinners come. He journeyed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and this woman met Him.

22-23. *And cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

Perhaps they meant, “Give her the blessing, and let her go. You are seeking quiet here, and she will not let you, nor us either, have any. ‘Send her away.’” They made a great mistake when they said, “She crieth after us.” It was Christ to whom she cried, not His disciples.

24. *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

“My ministerial commission is only to the Jews.” As a Savior, He comes to save sinners out of all nations, but as the Messiah, His special mission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25. *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

“Then came she and worshipped him.” If Jesus Christ was not really and truly God, He was a base imposter to allow this woman to worship Him. She had called Him, “Lord,” once before, and He did not rebuke her, and now she not only calls Him, “Lord,” but she worships Him. She was doing quite right, for He is none other than very God of very God, “Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.”

26. *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.*

Or “to little dogs,” for the word is in that form in the Greek.

27. *And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.*

It was well for her that the Master had used that diminutive form of the word, for the bigger dogs in the East were not permitted in the house, but the little dogs were admitted to play with the children. She seemed to snatch at that idea as she cried, “Truth, Lord: yet the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table,” as though the greatest possible boon to her was but a crumb to Him, and but a crumb compared with the bread which He was putting upon the table of Israel. The greater blessing which He was giving to the children might prompt Him to give a crumb to her.

28. *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

Oh, the triumph of faith! God grant it to us! Yet this woman may surely shame many of us, we have not half her discouragements, and we have not half her confidence in Christ.

29. *And Jesus departed from thence,—*

He is always on the move, for He has always something else to do. As soon as His deed of grace is done in one part, He hastens to another, “And Jesus departed from thence,”—

29-31. *And came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.*

This was Israel’s table indeed, and when you see these many mighty cures that Christ wrought, you can easily justify the speech of the Syrophenician woman, and agree with her that what she sought was only a crumb compared with the bountiful feast of fat things that was prepared for the favored nation.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—387, 542, 593, 538

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